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APPLICATION NO.	FILING DATE	FIRST NAMED INVENTOR	ATTORNEY DOCKET NO.	CONFIRMATION NO.
09/415,781	10/08/1999	ZAFAR LQBAL	19441-0019	5292
7590	06/10/2004		EXAMINER	
Daniel J. Warren SUTHERLAND ASBILL & BRENNAN LLP 999 Peachtree Street, NE Atlanta, GA 30309-3996			DOVE, TRACY MAE	
			ART UNIT	PAPER NUMBER
			1745	

DATE MAILED: 06/10/2004

Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.

Office Action Summary	Application No.	Applicant(s)
	09/415,781	LQBAL ET AL.
	Examiner Tracy Dove	Art Unit 1745

-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address --

Period for Reply

A SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD FOR REPLY IS SET TO EXPIRE 3 MONTH(S) FROM THE MAILING DATE OF THIS COMMUNICATION.

- Extensions of time may be available under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.136(a). In no event, however, may a reply be timely filed after SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- If the period for reply specified above is less than thirty (30) days, a reply within the statutory minimum of thirty (30) days will be considered timely.
- If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- Failure to reply within the set or extended period for reply will, by statute, cause the application to become ABANDONED (35 U.S.C. § 133). Any reply received by the Office later than three months after the mailing date of this communication, even if timely filed, may reduce any earned patent term adjustment. See 37 CFR 1.704(b).

Status

- 1) Responsive to communication(s) filed on 29 March 2004.
- 2a) This action is **FINAL**. 2b) This action is non-final.
- 3) Since this application is in condition for allowance except for formal matters, prosecution as to the merits is closed in accordance with the practice under *Ex parte Quayle*, 1935 C.D. 11, 453 O.G. 213.

Disposition of Claims

- 4) Claim(s) 1-25 is/are pending in the application.
 - 4a) Of the above claim(s) _____ is/are withdrawn from consideration.
- 5) Claim(s) 3,12 and 23 is/are allowed.
- 6) Claim(s) 1,2,4-11,13-22,24 and 25 is/are rejected.
- 7) Claim(s) _____ is/are objected to.
- 8) Claim(s) _____ are subject to restriction and/or election requirement.

Application Papers

- 9) The specification is objected to by the Examiner.
- 10) The drawing(s) filed on 19 November 1999 is/are: a) accepted or b) objected to by the Examiner.

Applicant may not request that any objection to the drawing(s) be held in abeyance. See 37 CFR 1.85(a).

Replacement drawing sheet(s) including the correction is required if the drawing(s) is objected to. See 37 CFR 1.121(d).
- 11) The oath or declaration is objected to by the Examiner. Note the attached Office Action or form PTO-152.

Priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119

- 12) Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).
 - a) All b) Some * c) None of:
 1. Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.
 2. Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. _____.
 3. Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this National Stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).
- * See the attached detailed Office action for a list of the certified copies not received.

Attachment(s)

- 1) Notice of References Cited (PTO-892)
- 2) Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948)
- 3) Information Disclosure Statement(s) (PTO-1449 or PTO/SB/08)
Paper No(s)/Mail Date 10/8/99.
- 4) Interview Summary (PTO-413)
Paper No(s)/Mail Date. _____.
- 5) Notice of Informal Patent Application (PTO-152)
- 6) Other: _____.

DETAILED ACTION

This Office Action is in response to the communication filed on 3/29/04.

Applicant's arguments have been considered, but are not persuasive. Claims 1-25 are pending with claims 3, 12 and 23 being directed toward allowable subject matter. This Action is made FINAL.

Double Patenting

The nonstatutory double patenting rejection is based on a judicially created doctrine grounded in public policy (a policy reflected in the statute) so as to prevent the unjustified or improper timewise extension of the "right to exclude" granted by a patent and to prevent possible harassment by multiple assignees. See *In re Goodman*, 11 F.3d 1046, 29 USPQ2d 2010 (Fed. Cir. 1993); *In re Longi*, 759 F.2d 887, 225 USPQ 645 (Fed. Cir. 1985); *In re Van Ornum*, 686 F.2d 937, 214 USPQ 761 (CCPA 1982); *In re Vogel*, 422 F.2d 438, 164 USPQ 619 (CCPA 1970); and, *In re Thorington*, 418 F.2d 528, 163 USPQ 644 (CCPA 1969).

A timely filed terminal disclaimer in compliance with 37 CFR 1.321(c) may be used to overcome an actual or provisional rejection based on a nonstatutory double patenting ground provided the conflicting application or patent is shown to be commonly owned with this application. See 37 CFR 1.130(b).

Effective January 1, 1994, a registered attorney or agent of record may sign a terminal disclaimer. A terminal disclaimer signed by the assignee must fully comply with 37 CFR 3.73(b).

Claims 13-20, 24 and 25 are rejected under the judicially created doctrine of obviousness-type double patenting as being unpatentable over claims 1-25 of U.S. Patent No. 09/415,466. Although the conflicting claims are not identical, they are not patentably distinct from each other because the claims of both the application and the patent are directed toward bipolar plates for fuel cells having a first electrically conductive coating formed thereon and a second overcoating is formed on the first coating.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 102

The following is a quotation of the appropriate paragraphs of 35 U.S.C. 102 that form the basis for the rejections under this section made in this Office action:

A person shall be entitled to a patent unless –

(e) the invention was described in (1) an application for patent, published under section 122(b), by another filed in the United States before the invention by the applicant for patent or (2) a patent granted on an application for patent by another filed in the United States before the invention by the applicant for patent, except that an international application filed under the treaty defined in section 351(a) shall have the effects for purposes of this subsection of an application filed in the United States only if the international application designated the United States and was published under Article 21(2) of such treaty in the English language.

Claims 1, 2, 4-11, 13-22, 24 and 25 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(e) as being anticipated by Yoshimura et al., US 6,291,094.

See Office Action of 6/9/03 for the reasons for rejection and for the teachings of Yoshimura. Thus the claims are anticipated.

Allowable Subject Matter

Claim 23 is allowed.

Claims 3 and 12 are objected to as being dependent upon a rejected base claim, but would be allowable if rewritten in independent form including all of the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims.

See Office Action of 6/9/03 for the reasons for allowance.

Response to Amendment

The declaration filed on 2/12/04 under 37 CFR 1.131 has been considered but is ineffective to overcome the Yoshimura (US6,291,094) reference.

The Yoshimura reference is a U.S. patent or U.S. patent application publication of a pending or patented application that claims the rejected invention. An affidavit or declaration is inappropriate under 37 CFR 1.131(a) when the reference is claiming the same patentable invention, see MPEP § 2306. If the reference and this application are not

commonly owned, the reference can only be overcome by establishing priority of invention through interference proceedings. See MPEP Chapter 2300 for information on initiating interference proceedings. If the reference and this application are commonly owned, the patent may be disqualified as prior art by an affidavit or declaration under 37 CFR 1.130. See MPEP § 718.

Furthermore, the evidence submitted is insufficient to establish a conception of the invention prior to the effective date of the Yoshimura reference. While conception is the mental part of the inventive act, it must be capable of proof, such as by demonstrative evidence or by a complete disclosure to another. Conception is more than a vague idea of how to solve a problem. The requisite means themselves and their interaction must also be comprehended. See *Mergenthaler v. Scudder*, 1897 C.D. 724, 81 O.G. 1417 (D.C. Cir. 1897). The evidence provided in the affidavit does not provide support for the claimed invention. Specifically, the disclosure documents provided teach “non-noble, lightweight metals like aluminum and titanium can be used as bipolar plates if the surfaces are protected against corrosion by an electrically conductive, oxidation-resistant barrier coating *or* cladding. This invention describes compositions and methods of providing such a coating *or* cladding on a metal like aluminum and titanium” (AlliedSignal Invention Disclosure, page two, under number 5). The documents cited in the affidavit do not disclose a three layer bipolar plate (claimed invention) including a metal plate, an electrically conductive coating over the metal plate and a corrosion resistant overcoating formed over the electrically conductive coating wherein the corrosion resistant overcoating includes graphite. The affidavit is not commensurate in

scope with the claimed invention because only a two layer bipolar plate is disclosed (metal plate/coating *or* metal plate/cladding).

Response to Arguments

Applicant's arguments filed 3/29/04 have been fully considered but they are not persuasive.

Double Patenting

Applicant stated they are prepared to file a terminal disclaimer to overcome the double patenting rejection above. The double patenting rejection is not considered a new grounds of rejection because the rejection was previously presented during prosecution, but was withdrawn because 09/415,466 was unintentionally abandoned. The application has been revived and is now U.S. Patent 6,649,031. Thus, the double patenting rejection has been reinstated.

35 U.S.C. 102(e)

Applicant argues the rejection in view of Yoshimura cannot stand because the reference is not available as prior art against the claimed invention. Applicant asserted that the claimed subject matter was invented earlier than May 3, 1999 (effective date of Yoshimura). However, Applicant has not provided sufficient evidence of invention for the claimed subject matter prior to May 3, 1999. See argument above regarding the affidavit filed on 2/14/04.

Conclusion

THIS ACTION IS MADE FINAL. Applicant is reminded of the extension of time policy as set forth in 37 CFR 1.136(a).

A shortened statutory period for reply to this final action is set to expire THREE MONTHS from the mailing date of this action. In the event a first reply is filed within TWO MONTHS of the mailing date of this final action and the advisory action is not mailed until after the end of the THREE-MONTH shortened statutory period, then the shortened statutory period will expire on the date the advisory action is mailed, and any extension fee pursuant to 37 CFR 1.136(a) will be calculated from the mailing date of the advisory action. In no event, however, will the statutory period for reply expire later than SIX MONTHS from the mailing date of this final action.

Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to Tracy Dove whose telephone number is 571-272-1285. The examiner can normally be reached on Monday-Thursday (9:00-7:30).

If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, Pat Ryan can be reached on 571-272-1292. The fax phone number for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned is 703-872-9306.

Information regarding the status of an application may be obtained from the Patent Application Information Retrieval (PAIR) system. Status information for published applications may be obtained from either Private PAIR or Public PAIR. Status information for unpublished applications is available through Private PAIR only. For more information about the PAIR system, see <http://pair-direct.uspto.gov>. Should you have questions on access to the Private PAIR system, contact the Electronic Business Center (EBC) at 866-217-9197 (toll-free).

June 2, 2004


Patrick Ryan
Supervisory Examiner
Technician
June 2, 2004